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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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SUBJECT: A SOVEREIGN QUEBEC WOULD STAY IN NATO, NORAD

REF: A) 77 QUEBEC 355 B) 77 QUEBEC 233

1. FOR THE FIRST TIME A SENIOR OFFICIAL OF THE PQ GOVERNMENT HAS DECLARED CATEGORICALLY AND PUBLICLY THAT A SOVEREIGN QUEBEC WILL REMAIN IN NATO AND NORAD.
IN A POLICY ORIENTED ADDRESS TO THE CANADIAN INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS IN QUEBEC CITY YESTERDAY (MARCH 7) INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS MINISTER CLAUDE MORIN PUT THE GOQ UNEQUIVOCALLY ON THE RECORD FOR CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN CURRENT DEFENSE AGREEMENTS.

2. "QUEBEC" , MORIN SAID, "KNOWS THAT IT IS A PART OF THE WESTERN COMMUNITY OF INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS. IT CANNOT ISOLATE ITSELF FROM THE DEFENSE SYSTEM ESTABLISHED IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE, WHATEVER FORM ITS EVENTUAL PARTI-CIPATION MAY TAKE. IT IS EVEN MORE OBVIOUS THAT WE CANNOT CREATE A VACUUM IN NORTH AMERICA IN DETACHING OUTSELVES FROM
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THE SYSTEM OF DEFENSE OF THIS CONTINENT, NORAD. WE AGREE THEREFORE TO SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR COLLECTIVE SECURITY AND EAST-WEST COOPERATION." MORIN ADDED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO EXAMINE THE POSSIBILITY OF A COMMON DEFENSE SYSTEM WITH CANADA AS ONE OF ITS "SOVEREIGNTY-ASSOCIATION" OPTIONS.

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3. IN A BRIEF OUTLINE OF A FUTURE QUEBEC FOREIGN POLICY,
MORIN PLACED RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES SECOND ONLY TO
RELATIONS WITH CANADA. "THE PROXIMITY OF THE UNITED STATES
, THE CLOSE ECONOMIC RELATIONS EXISTING BETWEEN THAT COUNTRY
AND OURS, THE PENETRATION OF QUEBEC BY AMERICAN CULTURE,
ALL LEADS QUEBECOIS NATURALLY TO PAY A GREAT DEALOF ATTENTION
TO THEIR RELATIONS WITH THEIR AMERICAN NEIGHBORS. LIKE ALL
THE COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD, WE WOULD LIKE TO BE POLITICALLY
AND ECONOMICALLY INDEPENDENT. BUT WE CANNOT IGNORE THE
REALITY OF THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF NATIONS. IN THIS PERSPECTIVE,
THE AMERICAN PROXIMITY, WITH ALL ITS ADVANTAGES AS WELL AS ITS
INCONVENIENCES, IS FOR US AN INELUCTIBLE FACT WITH WHICH
WE MUST EXIST, WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT. QUEBECOIS NATURALLY FEEL
DIFFERENTLY THAN AMERICANS AND IT IS NOT NECESSARY FOR
THEM TO MANIFEST AN ANTI-AMERICAN ATTITUDE IN ORDER TO EXIST
AS A DISTINCT PEOPLE."

4. MORIN ALSO SPOKE OF THE "SPECIAL EMPHASIS" QUEBEC WAS
PLACING THIS YEAR ON RELATIONS WITH THE US. HE EXPRESSED
HOPE THAT AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR QUEBEC AMONG THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
WOULD INCREASE WITH THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF QUEBEC ISSUES.
TO THAT END, HE SAID, BOTH HE AND PRIME MINISTER LEVESQUE
WOULD UNDERTAKE SEVERAL SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS IN THE US THIS YEAR.

5. COMMENT: BOTH MORIN AND OTHER GOQ OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD US
REPEATEDLY IN PRIVATE THAT QUEBEC WOULD REMAIN IN NATO AND
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NORAD AND PURSUE A "WESTERN-ORIENTED" FOREIGN POLICY.
LEVESQUE HIMSELF SAID SO OPENLY LAST DECEMBER (REFTEL)
ALTHOUGH HE EMPHASIZED THAT HE WAS SPEAKING PERSONALLY.
NEVERTHELESS, MORIN'S STATEMENT MARKS THE FIRST TIME THAT THE GOQ HAS
COME OUT FORMALLY FOR CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN THE WESTERN
ALLIANCES. HIS STATEMENT MARKS A 180 DEGREE TURNABOUT FROM THE
PQ PLATFORM OF SEVERAL YEARS AGO, WHICH CALLED UNQUALIFIED
PACIFISM AND FOR WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO AND NORAD. THAT PLANK
WAS AMENDED IN MAY 1977 TO CALL ONLY FOR AN "EVALUATION"
OF QUEBEC'S PARTICIPATION IN THE CONTEXT OF A PACIFIST FOREIGN
POLICY (REF B).

6. AMERICAN JOURNALISTS HAVE QUESTIONED BOTH LEVESQUE AND MORIN
REPEATEDLY IN RECENT MONTHS ABOUT QUEBEC'S PARTICIPATION IN
WESTERN DEFENSE AGREEMENTS. MORIN'S STATEMENT WAS CLEARLY
MADE IN AN ATTEMPT TO PUT US FEARS TO REST BEFORE HIS OWN AND
LEVESQUE'S AMERICAN TOURNEES PLANNED FOR COMING MONTHS.
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